

Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus #7

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An irregular publication of the US Orphan Service

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The USOS is committed to supporting the smooth operation to completion of PBM Diplomacy games and variants registered with the Boardman and Miller Number Custodians. This rag is published with the intent of facilitating the transference of games that have been turned over to the US Orphan Service to be rehoused and providing a forum for discussion of issues pertaining to the operation of the Service. My two assistants are:

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Current News Section

If any of you would like to receive all issues of YVSC that I publish, the cost will be \$0.25/issue. All players, GM's, and custodians who have an interest in particular issues will receive those issues free. I am willing to work out trades or other agreements on request, noting that the publication schedule of the szine will not be consistent. I also publish a "quasi-szine" called *The Boob Report* that I will throw in for free on any trade deals. The cost of trades is borne by me and causes no drain on US Orphan Service funds. A number of people have asked to receive only those issues that have substantive discussion and not those containing only game adjudications. Issues containing only game adjudications will bear a "1/2" label and go out only to those with an interest in the particular problem involved. I did publish a YVSC #6 1/2 that dealt with the demise of *Liberterrean*.

Steve Heinowski is the new assistant to the Boardman Number Custodian (congratulations, Steve). As his first task, Steve is conducting a survey of all of the games in the hobby to determine their current status. Any games that he cannot find or that are reported to be in trouble will then be referred to me for action. All publishers should have received a form from Steve by now; if you haven't, please send a list of all games (with BN) that you are running to Steve Heinowski, 12034 Pyle South Amherst, Oberlin, OH 44074. Thank you for your assistance in this important task.

Lee Kendter is passing the Miller Number Custodianship on to Fred Hyatt as of June 1st. I still would like to do a DIPDOMwide search of variant games to try to get the Miller Number records in shape. Lee received no records whatsoever from his predecessor and so there are many gaps. Lee notes in a letter to me that he took over in December of 1982, so there is almost nothing before that and Lee hasn't received many notices of game completions. I am

willing to assist either Lee or Fred in conducting such a search. Comments anyone? Lee's address is 4347 Benner Street, Philadelphia, PA 19135 and Fred Hyatt can be found at 60 Grandview Place, Upper Montclair, NJ 07043.

In other news today, Steve Langley has verified that 1985CV, formerly run by Doug King in *The Razor's Edge*, has been taken over by James Early, *The Razor's Edge's* pubber. Steve also is investigating a game that Derwood Bowen was running on flyer. That game has had problems in the past, but should be straightened out soon. Scott Hanson has rehoused 1985CR, formerly run by Steve Dycus in a subszine of Dave Kleiman's *The Diplomat*, with Brad Wilson. Scott is also in charge of the transfer of games from *Command*, a szine published by Dennis Agosta, to John Boardman. Dennis has promised to turn over all records and game fees to John. Thanks go to Dennis for what looks like a clean fold! I'm working to wrap up 1982CW, a game that was finished but never recorded from Bob Howerton's *Festings Hof*. I have to hear from just one more person on that one. *Liberterrean* finally is folding, from its latest incarnation under Kevin Kozlowski. I am placing four games from there. I guess that's about it, except for the continuing investigation into the *Envoy* games. Roy Henricks' support is eroding and I have given him a June 1st deadline. If adjudications are not forthcoming, I will conduct another player vote on moving those games. This time I believe it will pass.

Bruce Linsey will be publishing a Publisher's Handbook in the very near future and I was asked to contribute something on the Orphan Service. I decided to limit myself to one page of camera ready copy (see PAGE 2). Bruce probably will be retyping everything, but I thought all of you would be interested in a sneak preview. I look forward to the Handbook itself with considerable anticipation.

US Orphan Service Contribution to the Publisher's Handbook

by Jim Burgess

I must be one of the bringers of bad tidings. I'm going to try to get you to consider the day, that must come, when you will cease publishing. It is all well and good that publishers begin their journey full of excitement and anticipation, but prudent temperance will go a long way toward ensuring longevity and making my job easier.

I should first say a little bit about what that job is. The USOS is committed to supporting the smooth operation to completion of PBM Diplomacy games and variants registered with the Boardman and Miller Number Custodians. At the moment, I am one of three USOS custodians. We assist publishers in placing their games with other GMs when that inevitable day comes and you decide that you can't continue to publish. A typical game, adjudicated in a timely fashion on four week deadlines, can take up to three years to play out. If you take on too many games and adjudication delays mount, then the duration of your commitment (paradoxically, perhaps) can become considerably longer. A game that I started as a player in 1979 recently ended in the spring of 1986. The original GM got married, had two children, and started a new job over the course of the game and with each additional real life responsibility, the turn around time on the adjudications became longer and longer. Finally, the game was orphaned and placed by the USOS with a new GM. The publisher left Dipdom with a bad taste in his mouth and memories of the long periods of "shuddas", as in: "I should get these games done and off my desk, but I don't have the time, so I just feel guilty all the time." Is that the way you want your pubbing career to end?

Obviously not, so what can you do about it? The first thing to do is to take on pubbing responsibilities carefully and with a good deal of thought about what your other responsibilities will be over the next few years. One way of starting out is to take on orphaned games from the USOS. Because the games are already in progress, the length of the commitment you are making is shorter and you don't have to work as hard to find players as they come packaged with the game. The USOS keeps a list of GMs who are willing to accept orphaned games. Contact me if you are interested or have questions about this option.

On the other hand, life always is throwing unexpected curves at us that can make Diplomacy seem unimportant. So, even with the best planning, you may find yourself unable to adjudicate games on a timely schedule. In the 1979 game I mentioned above, the Orphan Service placed the game with a GM who started a new szine with the orphan as a beginning. Unfortunately, he subsequently had a bout with illness that made him temporarily unable to continue with the game and he had to pass it on yet again. I use this example because it seems to

illustrate the important issues that confront the Orphan Service as it tries to help players keep their games moving. Be realistic and allow some slack for unexpected events.

I'm not trying to take all the wind out of your sails, though. If you are considering becoming a pubber or already are one, reading this handbook is sure to help you avoid some problems. In fact, the existence of the Orphan Service should make you feel better about running games, knowing that someone is there to give you a hand if you run into problems. So by all means, PUBLISH!

Now let's look at how the Orphan Service will operate to help you when you are in trouble. My advice is to contact us first. I publish a USOS szine called *Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus*, YVSC for short, and I'd be pleased to trade with you. That would keep you in touch on a regular basis. If a problem arose, you would be ready to notify me immediately. The first thing to remember is that we're always willing to talk and work out a solution that will please as many people as possible. If you approach us first, then that task is made much easier. If a player approaches us first with a complaint, we have more unhappy people to please and things can quickly become more difficult. In addition, the problems tend to be much worse by that time.

What can we do to help? First of all, if your problem is temporary we can hook you up with GMs that would be willing to pick up your games on a temporary basis. If your problem is the gameload, where you've picked up too many games to handle at once, we can help you by taking a few games off your hands to reduce the load or offer other suggestions. For example, you can give some games to Guest GMs who can keep them in your szine. You can stagger your adjudication schedule to spread out the workload. Or you can go "warehouse" for awhile and put the adjudications ahead of the rest of the szine. Each individual situation is different and the Orphan Service tries to treat them that way. If you treat us like an enemy, we can play that game too, but as Dip players we know the value of cooperation and we infinitely prefer that course. Talk to us, we can be very friendly!

As a final caution, let me remind you how easy it will be to deceive yourself when things go wrong. Player interest in games goes straight down even with a short delay. You may think they "understand" because they're nice to you and don't complain too much and you may be right; however, you have destroyed their fun and they may just not care any more. Believe me, you save yourself and everyone else a great deal of pain and make DIPDOM a nicer place to be when you face up to the facts. Good luck! I hope you enjoy pubbing as much as I do!!

Letter Column Section

*I noted the recent passing of **The Not For Hire** containing an editorial from Steve Langley lamenting the lack of good letter columns. John Caruso has been berating me about being inconsistent in "complaining" about the Orphan Service workload. Let me partially answer John by stating that I would like to see this letter column fill part of that void. I'm doing YVSC in the way that I'm doing it because I want to. I welcome comments on any issue concerning any of DIPDOM's custodians. I'm afraid that I will have to edit some letters for space reasons so that we remain in 22 cent postage land, but otherwise I will be printing letters from now on with as little editorial interruption as possible. I will interspace letters with comments as they concern me, but I'll try not to editorialize too much. Let's see how it goes (my comments will continue to be italicized). First up is Paul Gardner:*

Jim,

Your debate with Elmer was a bit hard to follow 'cause I failed to start at the beginning. To me it seems that you would get a pretty high consensus among hobby members about what kinds of player grievances constitute grounds to take the game from the GM. If those specific grounds are not met I would say the players can walk off and play the game any way they want - *unofficially*. So, the GM still has the BN and the results and can if he wishes recruit 7 replacements (or whatever number is required) to play the game to conclusion.

From an emotional standpoint I prefer to think we have an anarchy - people coming and going at will. I'm definitely against any hobby wide organisation or regulation board. A clear need does *not* exist. From observing our Federal government it should be obvious that increasing the amount of bureaucracy and laws/regulations is a game where the gains in increased individual freedom and safety are rapidly overbalanced by the red tape, cost, loss of freedom, time wasted, and not to mention providing a potential tool for amateur dictators. The various sports federations in this country are a great example - Byers of the NCAA is a hypocritical dictator, the tennis authorities are always caught in power struggles, and the same in marathoning events. Organizing dipdom would be a blight on the hobby. Let chaos reign, I say.

- Paul

*John Caruso will be upset by the mixed metaphor in your next to last sentence (he's trying to keep us DIPDOMized), but I think you speak for the "average Joe". Linsey's poll in the latest **Diplomacy World** suggests that. John Caruso is starting to trumpet his Ombudsperson Service again. I don't feel that the Orphan Service should try to act impartially, but should be an advocate for the players sympathetic to the time demands and life pressures on GMs. People with*

unresolved disputes should write to John. Another new writer to this column is Dick Martin.

Dear Jim,

Glad to see you have good taste in co-workers. I know that Scott is good, and I suspect Steve will do just fine, too. Good luck to the three of you. As I recall, there was plenty of work for two when I was in it....

This is the first I've heard of any game in progress search, though it's a good idea. Don Ditter did one (or something like it) when he was BNC, and that helped place orphans then, so you may be on to something here. Other than *Envoy* (as usual) (I haven't lost total interest in having my game there placed, just given up hope that it ever will be, by the way), I can't think of any really late zeens that I get. Whether that's because I don't get nearly as many zeens as I used to (true), or nobody's folding anymore I can't say. What's your impression?

What a long letter from Elmer Hinton! Hope you really aren't finished with the GM-as-professional issue already, as this is my first chance to comment.

The first thing I notice is the "sole right" to run a particular game of Dip "barring breach of contract." Which contract is that? Did the players sign an exclusive contract with the GM that he would be the sole provider of Dip GMing services for them? Did I miss something from last issue here?

My understanding is that GMing is a service like any other, this "just cause" argument is ridiculous. If I don't like the mustache of the Exxon gas station attendant where I usually go and buy gas, I can trot across the street to Texaco for my service. Obviously Texaco can't be sued by Exxon for defamation of character or interference with livelihood because of this. This is just good old fashioned American capitalism and market forces at work. The exact same should be true of Dip GMing - the players should feel free to move their game at *any* time, for *any* reason. Similarly, the GM should feel free to encourage the players to stay by making his efforts more suitable to them - regular publication, low fees & competent adjudications are all most players will ever ask for, and if a GM is clean on all counts he will have nothing to worry about. Even the most revolting individuals can keep individuals happy by providing the basics.

Obviously, games aren't "stolen" from competent GMs that players are happy with. Neither are games vulnerable to multiple orphanings. The players would object, I expect, they're not mindless sheep.

A gamesmaster should have no effect on the way players play the game, conduct their diplomacy/moves, and who may win or lose. Thus, the replacement of the GM should be totally "transparent" in its effect on the possible outcome of the game. Removal of an active player is obviously

totally different - the removed player at least has no further chance to win. It is intuitively obvious why one of these situations is enough to make a game "irregular" and the other is not.

Funny, I don't feel like a petty warlord and I can't remember ever feeling like a dictator....

What is this Caruso is saying about Avalon Hill's right to revoke the right to play Dip PBM? Somehow, that doesn't sound right. If that were the case, then they could logically restrict FTF play as well. That's silly. As long as you don't reproduce any of the game components, my understanding is that you can do pretty much as you please, since the game is on the public market. It's an entirely different case when John asks to run another company's game (essentially a license, I suppose) when that game is not on the market and probably never will be.

I like John's guidelines for checking into and moving games. Not only are they sensible, they pretty much reflect the way things have worked to date. What more could you ask for? He's right, too - it's Dipdom (*anything* but "The Hobby"!). One final note on Professional Dip GMing before I go: anybody that insists on selling something that can be found easily for free won't make much money for very long....

Take care, Dick

*Let me add a few things at random. Mark Berch and others will attempt to answer your question about Avalon Hill's rights. In Elmer's defense, I believe a "Professional GM" of Dip would have to be perceived as offering a service that was "better" in some important way to make money on it. A contract need not be signed to generate the exclusivity either. It could, for instance, be included in the house rules that the GM claims an exclusive right to run that particular game. Then the players **implicitly** would be granting the GM an exclusive right by signing up to play. I think you and I would agree that well-informed players would not agree to such an arrangement in today's "marketplace".*

Your argument on irregularity is incomplete. Take a look at Ken Gestiehr's letter up next.

((from 1984IR's Russia)) I don't think this game should be played anymore because:

1) I've been told by two players they no longer want to fight.

2) This game is irregular due to the fact that the original GM ((Jim Bumpas)) is now a player.

3) One of the original players (England) became the second GM ((Kevin Kozlowski)).

4) Standbys came into the game with moves ((but)) without prior addresses to negotiate with the other players or them with the standby.

In light of current NMRs, you can gather #1 is partially true ((two out of six players NMRed)). I think we at least need an ombudsman if not a direct line to the BNC to declare this one irregular. It is therefore suggested that this game not be

passed...until matters are resolved.

Sincerely, Kenneth J. Gestiehr

Thanks for your comments Ken. Both the BNC and the director of the OSS (ombudsman service) are reading this now. The players involved should tell me they don't want to continue and standbys will be found though. Usually, games are played to conclusion even if they are declared "irregular". I'll keep 1984IR until we resolve the problem. The deadline of May 15th for Winter adjustments still holds and I'll print any more comments that I receive by then. Players also may write directly to John Caruso (OSS) at 29-10 164th Street, Flushing, NY 11358 or Bill Quinn (BNC) at 301 Conroe Drive, Conroe, TX 77301.

Getting back to Dick Martin, thanks for your support of John Caruso's guidelines, but I think we need a little more discussion. When you need someone who gets right to the point, who better than Russ Rusnak. This is an excerpt from a letter dated May 1st.

Dear Jim; The reason I am writing is Rauterberg. His deadline was 3/8 and he hasn't been heard from since. I just tried calling and got a busy signal. Anyway, while talking to Langley he stated that you people waited a lot longer before you took any action. That could be a mistake since waiting much longer could get you games where the players have all had it and want nothing to do with finishing the game. I have written Paul a couple of notes, then again since you play there I'm sure you already noticed. Has he said anything to you? Have you said anything to him? Also I guess I might be stating that it might be a good idea to get on tardy GMs a little sooner, if you are worried about hurting feelings I might be willing to give you a hand in a month or so. I very rarely worry about hurting feelings, especially when the person is taking advantage of friendships or simply screwing up anyway.

Best to you and yours, Russ

*I hope Russ doesn't mind that I printed that, but he makes a couple of important points. I haven't heard from Paul either, though I also have made some inquiries. With a major szine like **Midlife Crisis** that has almost always been on time, I don't think it's a good idea to wait a full three months. Paul just started his own business and I'm sure he's swamped, but I think it's time we found out what he intends to do. John Caruso sent me an outline of his letter from last time that I think I'll throw in here:*

USOS Ideas Restated

1 - When the USOS will move a game

A - Abandoned

B - GM folded

C - Player Agreement

a - 100% players vote yes

b - All players voting vote yes

D - Other (specify)

- 2 - When the USOS will check into a game
 - A - Player complaints
 - a - Preferably verified by documentation and brought up to either BNC or OSS too!
 - 1 - GMing mistakes
 - 2 - Sloppiness
 - 3 - Cheating
 - 4 - Other irregularities (specify)
 - b - Multiple player/s complaints about same problem
 - c - GM abuse / lack of unbiasedness
 - B - Lateness
 - a - 3 months
 - C - Repeated lateness
 - a - 3 months late, a 2nd time a few issues off
 - b - Consecutive 3 month, 2 month, 3 month, etc.
 - c - Total irregularity in appearance
 - d - Excessive lateness, length of time and/or number of times
 - D - Other (specify)

I think the framework is excellent. Thanks, John. I guess the issue I'm trying to bring up at the moment is whether we should distinguish cases based on szine size. Should we treat large "DIPDOM-wide" szines differently from warehouse szines running one or two games? When large szines get a little bit behind it seems to be much more difficult to get them back on a regular schedule. Players do lose interest very quickly and when many games are involved the task of restarting them all at once is very difficult. It only gets worse as interest flags. The biggest problem for the USOS is getting players to write back to us, remember. Historically, the Orphan Service seems to have done the worst job on the largest folds. Thoughts, anyone?

Before I get to the rest of John Caruso's letter, I want to squeeze Mark Berch in here.

Dear Jim Burgess,

I've been enjoying YVSC a great deal; you're doing an excellent job with the zine. I did want to respond to a few things in John Caruso's letter.

1. John says, "Since the average zine runs about 5-6 games (if I read Mark Berch's last publisher's survey correctly), the workload is hardly excessive for one person, let alone two." As is so often the case when John Caruso writes about me, his statement is entirely fictitious. My survey did not ask how many games were run, and thus I reported no such figure. John is either confused, or has made this figure up.

2. John says, "And if they ((the Avalon Hill Game Company)) said tomorrow that 'no one can run PBM games ever again without paying TAHG Co.' then no one could legally run Dip games." What is John's basis for saying this? While I'm not 100% certain (I'd want to hear John's reasoning first), I'd be very very surprised if what John said is correct. I think John misunderstands how copyright law works. Copyright limits your rights to *reproduce* (or broadcast) the material, but not your right to use it.

This is true pretty much regardless of whether money changes hands or not. Thus, you can take a copyrighted cookbook, and *use* a recipe in your profitable restaurant. You can take some copyrighted accounting software and (if you are a CPA), *use* that software on your accounting jobs. But you can't reprint the recipe on the menu, and you can't duplicate the software for other members of your accounting firm. ((*unless you buy a site license...sorry for the interruption*)) If you buy a dictionary, you can use it even if you charge money for your writing; if you subscribe to an investment newsletter, you can *use* that advice when giving financial counsel to your clients; and if you buy a game, you are entitled to use (play) the game, even if you charge for it. I realize that there are some games which can't practically be run on a PBM basis without significant copying (and of course, some game manufacturers may be bluffing, asserting rights they do not have), but I see no reason why Diplomacy would be in that category. The GM would have to be careful to buy the game itself, and not to (e.g.) reproduce the map. I should note that neither TAHG Co. (or the previous owner, GRI, Inc.) have ever (so far as I know) asserted that they owned such a right. The reason for that is, they don't. And even if they did, the fact that they tolerated this (knowingly) for over 20 years would probably mean they'd be stopped from legally asserting such rights in the future. In short, John just doesn't know what he is talking about.

3. John questions whether the USOS really needs even two custodians. I think 3 is a fine idea, and in fact, USOS originally started with three people.

Mark Berch

Thank you for the support (and precedent) on having three custodians. In John's defense, I think his "evidence" was his experience with the other game company when he wanted to run their game by mail. I think you make an airtight case for PBM Dip being in the public domain, however. After all, TAHG Co. even advertises our existence. Let's let John follow up some of his other arguments now:

Jim,

If players are reluctant to write to the USOS about the transfer, what makes you think handing the game over to the new GM instantly can hurt? You have not provided one good reason for the USOS to run one turn before handing it over to the new GM. But I can provide a number of reasons why giving a game to a new GM instantly is more beneficial.

(1) The game restarts instantly and goes on a regular schedule from that point on.

(2) There is only the chance of one group of new players coming in (standbys). With USOS running 1 turn, there is the possibility of the new GM having to call a whole new set of standbys (it may not happen but it could). You claim that you don't want the GM to exhaust his standbys initially, but you can't

guarantee he won't have to call a standby for your USOS standby. You're also overlooking the fact that you could supply the new GM with a copy of the Universal Standby List (as compiled by Elmer Hinton) and he could use those before using his regular standbys to supplement his own list.

(3) Saves the USOS time & work & money (I'm sure I don't have to explain that).

(4) Saves the players from "A GM a turn" syndrome, that your policy consists of (again, it's obvious). Since when does a 1 turn GM give a game more reliability than a regular GM who comes out on a predetermined schedule? Your policy is undermining the reliability of those you are placing the games with. You want volunteers, yet let it be known that you'll do 1 turn to establish reliability. What's wrong with the new GM's reliability that you have to run 1 turn? If you're short on GMs (which is why the policy was originally used, as I recall), then I agree with the use of the interim 1 turn (or more) GM. But as policy - it stinks. As a player - it stinks. As a volunteer to taking over an orphan as a GM - it stinks. True, it's my personal opinion, and not everyone else's opinions will agree with mine, but I see the 1 turn GM policy of the USOS as illogical and lacking of common sense, not to mention a waste of the USOS's time and money. Since you stated to me in the last YVSC that you spend too much time now, and are not paid, you'd think you'd want to save yourself both time and money (Footnote - I realize you're funded by voluntary contributions and convention donations and that the money I'm referring to that you wrote about is basically - salary; while donations, etc. are supplied to cover costs).

I know that the USOS is a dirty job. You have to deal with GMs at the worst (folding, late, indifferent, and many other feelings) and that players are upset because of this. But how many letters need to be written each game? Only 1 - with copies to all players involved. How long does a phone call take? I'm talking about game related matters to the late or folding zine, 20 minutes?

I know you have a tough job. Many custodians do. The USOS is probably the toughest. But many of your problems are caused by the USOS and Dipdom at large. Looking into game complaints about GMs, which is one thing you claim you're doing, is not necessary. You could refer the matter to: (A) the BNC, who himself is very busy, or (B) Ombudsman Service, which was set up to handle just those kinds of problems, and which has a dozen names as volunteers to try to help resolve these problems. While you and the BNC put in about 20 hrs. a week each (from what you both say), the people on the Ombudsman list are rarely called. I'm not talking about novices on the list either. I'm talking about experienced Dipdom people, each with over 7 years experience. Names like John Michalski, Mark Berch, Rod Walker, Don Ditter, Steve Heinowski, John Caruso, etc. Part of the problem here lies in the way Dipdom has presented

the OSS (that itself is partly my fault too, so I'm speaking up now, hopefully to correct that). Dipdom sees the OSS only as a list of ombudsmen to be called to resolve a dispute. This is the main purpose of the list, but there is another purpose. The Ombudsman Service can be used to inquire about defaulting GMs or zines, resolving disputes or solving problems between GM and player outside of the formal Ombudsman process of mutual agreement. I myself have solved dozens of such problems. But I myself, as well as the other volunteers, have plenty of time to do the hearing and resolving work, if someone would forward the data to me to farm out, and better yet, if the many zines would plug the OSS this way - not only as ombudsmen, but people willing to try to resolve problems. Guess I'll end this here.

Take care and thanks for the plug, John

PS Keep up the good work.

PPS Glad you caught on to DIPDOM.

We're never going to completely agree about the USOS running a turn, but let me go over your points:

1) It is a fact that the game restarts faster in most cases if the USOS runs a turn. In cases where that isn't true, I'm happy not to run one.

2) Oh come on...if a player isn't going to continue, they won't write back the first time. Of course it's possible that the USOS standby will NMR, but that's always a risk. I do plug Elmer's standby list every issue, but I still think the USOS has a responsibility to make things as easy as possible for the new GM. I've seen many cases where games are passed on without this service and the GMs become very discouraged by the NMRs in the first turn.

3) You have convinced me to try to avoid running turns when I don't have to. I'm afraid the definition of "have to" will remain up to the individual custodians.

4) I only use reliable GM volunteers, as far as I can ascertain it. It's the old GM's reliability that was in question and we don't want to make the players wait longer while we gather information and conduct votes on moving games. Let's also get it straight that I was commenting on the workload when I was by myself. Naturally, the workload is less now and seems just about right and I have no desire to be paid a salary. Could we please stop trying to twist my words?

*I don't think you have a very clear picture of how "expensive" information is in this job. I have never placed games from a szine that I was receiving at the time. It would be nice if people traded with the USOS as a matter of course, but they don't, so I start with **NOTHING**. No addresses, no supply center chart, no adjudications, and no game histories. Even with GMs who I would term "cooperative", it takes at least two letters or phone calls to acquire this information. I'm sorry, but I think you're mired in fantasyland.*

On another tack, I'm quite pleased to plug the OSS. Honestly, I thought the service had died. I don't want to be an ombudsman, since I think the USOS works better when it doesn't try to assign blame. You will

hear from us, I assure you. What about the 84IR case? I've sent you the relevant information. Now aren't you glad I wasn't passing games on without running a turn?

It looks like I'll be going to ten pages, the outer limit of 22 cent land, so I guess I have room for more of Elmer Hinton. I want to remind everyone that ideas in a democracy sell themselves on their own merits and I won't censor someone just because I don't like their opinions. In fact, I enjoy responding to Elmer.

Dear Jim,

You're right in one way; we seem to be at loggerheads, but only now have you brought out the two fundamentals of your reasons, and so only now can I point out the fallacies in both. Briefly. ((Thank you))

First, the essence of your disagreement seems to be that the difference between whether a GM is a Professional or an amateur makes a difference in his rights and responsibilities to the players. I say, there is no difference. Who is right?

The deciding factor is, of course, the law. Your reply was "I still don't accept the jurisdiction of US courts in the matter." I found that point rather mind boggling.

This is the United States of America. This land is not Lebanon. This land is not Cambodia. This land is not ruled by nut cases, ideologues, or presidents-for-life. This land is ruled by the rule-of-law. There is no place in it where the law does not belong or extend. It is also, fortunately, a place where that law is given the latitude to be followed without minute enforcement. That factor is also unfortunate because it is the direct cause of the huge silly-suit backlog of the court system. However, that body of law exists. It is relevant and must apply. In a country where the law may be changed, by the will of people, by petition, by vote or by litigation or other redress, the law becomes responsible to the will of that people; but that does not make it one whit less to be respected or obeyed.

Those who reject the law, place themselves outside of it. Those who seek to carve their own little empires by ignoring it, or disobeying it when it seems inconvenient for them to live up to it, are due no consideration or respect in return. Those who say there is no room for the law in their corner of the world, in their club, in their hobby or, worse, those who recommend breaking that law in the course of their activities (not an unknown circumstance in the hobby), have my pity.

((Sorry to interrupt such a magnificent tirade...and, by the way, it's DIPDOM...but I'm going to edit out some of this. I thought you said "briefly". Note I said "jurisdiction" and "the matter". If Elmer Hinton sends me a letter bomb, you can be damned sure the authorities are going to hear about it. If Elmer Hinton polls the players in 1984HL (my game in *The Boob*

Report) and takes the game from me based on that vote, I might go to John Caruso's ombudsman service, but never a court. All I am saying is that we should be able to police ourselves with moral and legal discussion and not have to put ourselves under a court's jurisdiction. That's what we're doing here, in case you hadn't noticed. Otherwise, we add to the "silly-suit backlog of the court system". Now, back to Elmer))

Your second false basis, buried in your note to John, is the worse. Let me set both of you straight. Title 17 (the Copyright law) is well written and quite specific. You know what happens if Avalon Hill says tomorrow for GMs to stop running Diplomacy? They get laughed at. Why? Because they have no authority to do so. You see, copyright gives only the right-to-copy; it does not protect ideas, systems, or usage of product. Companies like buyers to believe that kind of thing, but it just aint so.

You may recall a game of a few years ago; Machiavelli. It was an interesting game. It was a game whose rules, after some reading, were recognizable to any Diplomacy player. It was and is a blatant Diplomacy variant. BATTLELINE produced it, and Avalon Hill, howl though they did, had nothing to say because the rules were re-worded, and they did not violate copyright...so AH bought it. Otherwise, there was no recourse for them because they have no patent nor any other proprietary rights concerning usage-of-product. Anyone may play it; any GM, pro or amateur, may run it and they have nothing to say in the matter. Period. John, if that other company you mention told you differently, you were had!

The law is clear, we do not play on their sufference; I made that clear in the issue before, I thought. Once a game company releases rules for general play, they lose all proprietary right to control that play (and don't tell me that precedent doesn't apply - AH is a professional company!). So amateurs of the world, sleep well. Avalon Hill (or GDW or TSR...etc.) cannot close that door. They cannot legally stop anyone from running Diplomacy who wishes to (so it was inaccurate of you to imply that this was accepted by me by claiming transfer of their rights was the essence of my position - since they have no such right in the first place). Read Title 17 sometime; John; Jim; I recommend it. The copyright law is, you'll find, much different from, say trademarks, or patents (though the ignorant tend to confuse them all, I admit).

On John's comments: his idea establishing standards are good; except for one major complaint: it's THE HOBBY, not dipdom! ((I like DIPDOM, but we have an anarchy (remember?), so call it what you please))

Repeated delays are harder to judge - some regular zines have deadlines 5-7 weeks apart; so the question gets sticky. My advice in K100 was after two or three chronic delays, start looking into the matter.

Yours as always,
 ((unsigned...presumed to be

Elmer))

I tend to believe that we should look into problems sooner and then give considerable leeway before we go to a player vote on moving games. Otherwise, I thank you for your copyright analysis and have little else to say. Now, Elmer has some postscripts, including a long one about this szine's only non-person, with whom no more time will be wasted, but I will pull a few choice excerpts (we should be able to fill most of the page):

While a GM removed without good cause could use an Ombudsman to get his game back (or at least have the move, and thus the game declared irregular), anyone who thinks it would be possible to remove you because of it has been smoking his socks. If you started making cornball decisions, people might stop using you; there might even lie that alternative service possibility, but talk of removal is ridiculous and unnecessary. ((thank you for the implied support))

Well, I better sign off. I'm not going to stay the proper stuffed shirt if I start sounding too human by accident. First though - I'm not a Plato Utopian; I'm definitely a Draconian Realist!

Secondly (in case you didn't see it in KK), I want

to invite discussants on a round robin discussion of organization. The subject has come up, so I thought I would trot out the option. If no one wants it, I'll shelve it for another four or five years, but if the idea catches on... Considering your views on the subject I think your input would be most interesting. Please feel free to join in. I'll publish the first exchange and participant list, and I'm taking volunteers for the next pubber in the round robin. This will just be among the discussants at first - I don't expect to go public (for good or ill) before the fall - if discussion lasts that long.

To be honest with you, I was hoping the idea would die. I really don't want to get you pro-organization types riled up. On the other hand, a "secret" organization discussion smacks of conspiracy. There is one individual who thinks he is an organization that I would get rid of, but otherwise I am quite satisfied with the organization of DIPDOM at the moment. If you get anywhere with this, can I trust you to let me know down the road? I thought not...still, I think I'll take my chances. Anyone who would like to write to Elmer about this can find his address below. Ah, done at last (this part was written last), I may publish again in two weeks or else we'll see you in a month. Thanks to all the writers.

USOS Standbies and GMs Willing to Take Games

The USOS keeps a public list of volunteers to standby for orphaned games. It is my opinion that GMs who take over games should not have to exhaust their own standbies to replace resigning players. This list is a leftover from 1985's Universal Standby List. As with all standby lists, anyone who wants on or off should let me know. USOS standbies (number of games willing to take on in parentheses) are: Steve Heinowski (2), Cecil Solomon (1), Dave Rice (1), Keith Sesler (1), Robert Acheson (1), Dan Gorham (1), Dave Ditter (1), Steve Wilcox (1), Mark Luedi (1), Melinda Holley (too many), Brad Wilson (1), James Kramer (1), and Dan Palter (1). Any GMs who are looking for more standbies or who want to be on a general standby list should contact Elmer Hinton at 20 Almont Street, Nashua, NH 03060.

Another need is for GMs willing to take on orphaned games. I need more volunteers for this essential task. Please let me know if you are willing to take variants as well. The USOS GM list is (# willing to take on in parentheses): John Boardman (2), Mark Luedi (2), Dick Martin (3), John Caruso (1), Elmer Hinton (2 + 2 variant), and Melinda Holley (3). Jim Benes and Howard Christie will be picking up the *Liberterrean* games, so more are needed, especially those willing to pick up variants. Some of you may be worried about how miscommunication among the USOS custodians might cause three games to drop on you at once (one from each of us). Never fear, I've already thought of that. As coordinator, all requests will go through me first!

Personal Note to You:

Dear Larry, I strongly disapprove of Bill Quinn's mass mailing in support of his selection as 1986 Don Miller Award Winner. I was going to vote for him. Ballot enclosed, ^{separately} courtesy of Mr. Quinn. Take care Jim

Murd'ring Ministers Insert

1983AY

headlines of the day:

GERMAN CAUSE BEGINS TO LOOK HOPELESS AS THE HOMELAND AGAIN FALLS TO THE WHITE CLAD HORDES FROM THE EAST. CAN ANYONE STOP THEM BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE?

TURKISH SETBACKS AWAKEN DISSOLUTE SULTAN. ABDULLAH ABANDONS THE FAIRER SEX TO HEAD FOR THE FRONT, BUT WILL HIS MIND SOBER QUICKLY ENOUGH TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE UNOCCUPIED ITALIAN CAPITAL?

Summer 1908

GERMANY(Albrecht): R a kie-RUH.

Fall 1908

FRANCE(Lucas): f HOL S GERMAN a mun-kie, f eng-IRI, a BUR-mun, a APU S GERMAN a tyo-ven, f TYH S f tun-ion, a TUS S GERMAN a tyo-ven, a PIE S GERMAN a tyo-ven, f TUN-ion, f mid-NAO.

GERMANY(Albrecht): a tyo-VEN, a mun-kie (d r:sil,otb), a RUH S a mun-kie, f ber S a mun-kie (d r:bal,otb), f edi-NTH.

ITALY(Gardner): f NAP S FRENCH a apu.

RUSSIA(Brown,CAN): f HEL S a kie, a sil-BER, a vie-TYO, a boh-MUN, f nwy-NWG, a KIE S a boh-mun, f DEN S a kie, a SWE h, f nao-LVP, a PRU S a sil-ber, f AEG h.

TURKEY(Brown,USA): a con-BUL, f EAS S f ion, f GRE S f ion, f ION S f adr, a TRI S a ven, a ven S RUSSIAN a vie-tyo (d r:rom,otb), f ADR S a ven.

Supply Center Chart

FRANCE: 9 or 10 cntrs - bre,par,mar,spa,por,bel,lon, (has 9, even (TUR. r:rom) or bld 1 (TUR. r:otb))
tun,hol,rom?

GERMANY: 2 cntrs - edi,ven (has 3, 4 or 5, rem 1 (2 r:otb), rem 2 (1 r:otb) or rem 3)

ITALY: 1 cntr - nap (has 1, even)

RUSSIA: 14 cntrs - stp,mos,sev,war,rum,swe,bud,vie, (has 11, bld 3)
ber,den,nwy,kie,mun,lvp

TURKEY: 7 or 8 cntrs - ank,con,smy,bul,gre,tri,ser, (has 7 or 8, even)
rom?

(total=34 cntrs)

THE DUE DATE FOR WINTER 1908 AND SPRING 1909 IS JUNE 5TH, 1986

Addresses of the Participants

FRANCE: Jerry Lucas, 3902 Lakemead Way, Redwood City, CA 94062

GERMANY: Jeff Albrecht, P.O. Box 295, Doland, SD 57436-0295

ITALY: Paul Gardner, Rt. 1, Box 2338, Newfane, VT 05345

RUSSIA: Ron Brown, 70 F Chesterton Drive, Nepean, Ontario, CANADA K2E 5S9

TURKEY: Ron Brown, 1528 El Sereno Pl., Bakersfield, CA 93304

GM: Jim Burgess, 100 Holden Street, Providence, RI 02908, (401) 351-0287

Game Notes:

1) The FR, FRT, and FT draw proposals are all rejected. An RT proposal is made. As before, vote with your next set of orders. The NVR counts as a no.

2) The map follows on the next page. Germany and Turkey have autumn retreats, orders may be made

conditional on those retreats. Two requests will be sufficient to separate Winter and Spring.

3) Thanks for the press!

Press:

(RUSSIA-GERMANY): Maybe you've forgotten about your attack on Sweden in 1901, but I haven't!

(CONSTANTINOPLE): Sultan Abdullah al-Gonhorea looked up from the bared chest of the busty little cutie who had most recently joined his harem. She was native of Venice; and if she were representative of the populace there, then there was truth to the legends regarding the large busts of Venetian women. (According to the legend, over the years as most Venetians became wealthy merchants, they began to go blind at an early age. It is said to have been related to the fact they spent so much of their time counting their coins late at night by the light of a single candle. Because of this, Venetian women developed larger breasts so their near-blind mates could find and recognize them more easily).

A slight rattling sound caused al-Gonhorea to look from his beauty to the sight of a military Aide-de-Camp with an agitated expression on his face. His scimitar rattled slightly in its sheath as the aide stood, shaking visibly and obviously rattled (no pun

intended).

"Well, speak up, what is it?!", demanded the Sultan.

"Bad news, your Excellency! The 3rd Army of Holy Redeemers has just been butchered by the French in Apulia. The barbarous Infidels drove our gallant heroes right into the ocean and slaughtered all they could lay hands on. The 3rd Army has ceased to exist!"

"Out, scum! I must think on these tidings!", al-Gonhorea snorted as he waved for the Aide to leave him. "You, too, Babe, I got to be alone now," he said and the Venetian Beauty got up and left him alone.

Once alone the Sultan thought aloud, "I have been away from the front too long. It is my fault that the attack falters... Enough of such frivolities. I will once again lead my men in the Holy War against the West!"

((thanks for the rare and classic Golden Age work))

